

Council edits made in
Committee are highlighted

Recommended edits from
legal are RED

PROPOSED BY: GALLOWAY
INTRODUCED: OCTOBER 7, 2025

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RECEIVING THE FOREST RESILIENCE PLAN SUBMITTED BY THE
FOREST RESILIENCE TASK FORCE**

WHEREAS, Whatcom County has several local planning and regulatory documents with a nexus to forests, including but not limited to, the Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action Plan, WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan, Shoreline Management Plan, Critical Areas Ordinance, Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and Lake Whatcom Management Program Work Plan; and

WHEREAS, on August 9, 2022, the Whatcom County Council passed [Resolution 2022-036](#) establishing priorities for Whatcom County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan update, which included several strategies and actions to support climate resilient forests and a thriving timber economy; and

WHEREAS, on October 10, 2023, the Whatcom County Council adopted [Ordinance 2023-058](#) establishing the Forest Resilience Task Force to develop a comprehensive forest resilience plan for Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 2023-058 tasked the Forest Resilience Task Force with reviewing county policies, engaging relevant stakeholders, incorporating community values, and engaging science and evidence-based strategies to achieve the following priorities:

- Sustaining a prosperous timber economy,
- Restoring healthy forest ecosystems for fish and wildlife,
- Supporting robust recreation opportunities,
- Improving watershed health,
- Addressing stream high and low flow issues,
- Enhancing carbon sequestration and storage,
- Improving wildfire, pest, and disease resilience, and
- Increasing the overall resilience of Whatcom County forests to climate impacts; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force met monthly from July 15, 2024 to September 15, 2025, with numerous subcommittee meetings throughout that period; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force submitted the Forest Resilience Plan to Council on September 25, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Resilience Task Force was established for a limited duration and tasked solely with completing the Forest Resilience Plan, and, having completed its work, the Task Force will sunset per WCC 2.170.015; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Resilience Plan outlines proposes next steps that the county, tribes, and stakeholders can take to promote the resilience of county forests, including:

- Soliciting comments from additional advisory committees,
- Continuing government-to-government consultation with Tribes,
- Providing an opportunity for public comment,
- Seeking comments and recommendations from the County Executive,
- Establishing a committee to implement the plan, including incorporating feedback from groups identified above, recommending governance and management mechanisms to advance early priorities, and drafting an implementation plan and budget for recommended early actions, and
- Publishing and distributing the plan; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County benefits from ongoing coordination and collaboration on all forest related issues across local, state, federal and tribal governments as well as continued engagement and advisement from technical experts, industry, conservation organizations, community, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, [Ordinance 2025-011](#) amending Whatcom County Code Chapter 2.123 Forest Advisory Committee was adopted by the Whatcom County Council on February 25, 2025, which expanded the scope and membership of the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC); and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 2025-011 identified a need for FAC as a council-appointed committee to advise the county on the ongoing work of managing forestland for multiple uses and outcomes as determined by the Forest Resilience Plan; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 2025-011 identified FAC as the advisory group best positioned to provide ongoing guidance to county leaders on a wider scope of issues related to forests and forestry and to track the progress of the county's related plans and priorities; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 2025-011 identified a need for FAC as a council-appointed committee to advise the county on the ongoing work of managing forestland for multiple uses and outcomes as determined by the Forest Resilience Plan; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 2025-011 expanded the function of the FAC to include reviewing and providing recommendations related to forest management plans and other plans, policies, and proposals which directly affect forest lands and forest resilience in Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, the FAC reviewed the Forest Resilience Plan and finds: (1) the Goals and Objectives generally acceptable, (2) uncertainty as to what ownerships fall under the Plan's various recommendations, and (3) the Actions too broad, lacking economic, environmental, or social cost benefit analysis, and requiring costly resources to implement; and

WHEREAS, the FAC identified outdated information, inaccuracies, and incorrect citations in the Plan, and FAC members are committed to working with county staff to correct these; and

WHEREAS, ~~the Whatcom County Council recognizes the FAC Forest Advisory Committee will may~~ require ~~additionalsufficient~~ staff capacity to accomplish a body of work of this scope and scale ~~and will work collaboratively with the Executive's Office to try to meet those needs in good faith.~~

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that the Council receives Exhibit A, the Forest Resilience Plan, as submitted by the Forest Resilience Task Force as an initial draft, and commits to supporting ongoing work related to forest resilience in Whatcom County, including the provision of sufficient county staff support; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that the Forest Advisory Committee ~~is formally tasked to~~ shall develop ~~thea proposed~~ Whatcom County Forest Resilience Plan, for consideration and formal adoption by the County and will annually propose updates to the adopted Forest Resilience Plan, including proposed changes to, but not limited to, the following sections: updating the initial draft through annual updates by section, with modifications to but not limited to the following sections: (1) Executive Summary, (2) Background, (3) Forest Assets, (4) Whatcom County Programs and Resources, and (5) Recommended Actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that the Forest Advisory Committee ~~is tasked with ongoing oversight of~~ will provide the County with oversight recommendations for the Forest Resilience Plan ~~as outlined inconsistent with WCC~~ Chapter 2.123 (Forest Advisory Committee), including recommending updates at least once every five years ~~and providing the council with implementation guidance when requested~~; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that the Forest Advisory Committee shall continue to provide implementation recommendations to the County and guidance to the Council upon request, and shall also review and update the proposed next steps section of the Forest Resilience Plan, recommending actions to support the implementation of ongoing work as outlined in the Forest Resilience Task Force draft Forest Resilience Plan. as currently identified in the Forest Resilience Plan and take steps to implement the Plan.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2025

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Chris Quinn by email (10/7/25-ko)
Civil Deputy Prosecutor